

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

April 27, 2017

The Honorable Donald J. Trump
President of the United States
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Trump:

We write to express our growing concern regarding the large number of outstanding vacancies in key national security positions in your Administration. Nearly 100 days after your inauguration and with multiple international crises looming, it is unacceptable that these critical roles remain unfilled. We strongly urge you to make the defense and diplomacy of our nation an immediate priority by identifying and nominating qualified candidates to lead our national security departments.


At present, more than half of the senior positions at the State Department are unfilled, hobbling our efforts to engage with the international community and to effectively coordinate with our allies. In addition, hundreds of vital diplomatic posts around the world remain vacant, undermining relationships vital to America's economy and national security. For example, it is distressing that at a time when U.S. forces and our allies in the Asia-Pacific are gravely threatened by North Korea, there are seven U.S. ambassador positions with key treaty allies, partners, and institutions in the region that remain vacant.

The leadership hierarchy at the Pentagon is similarly barren. The integral duties of the Under Secretary of Defense for Policy continue to be performed by an acting civil servant caretaker. Further, an alarming number of positions at the Assistant Secretary of Defense (ASD) and Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense (DASD) level are unfilled or without formal candidates, including posts devoted to Countering Weapons of Mass Destruction and Security Cooperation. All of these vacancies severely impair our ability to set, enact, and enforce defense policy around the globe.

We are also troubled by reports that some delays in nominations at the Department of Defense have resulted from your rejection of qualified candidates recommended by Secretary Mattis. Loyalty to our country and commitment to public service should be paramount when selecting nominees—not fealty to your presidential campaign. To rapidly fill critical positions with qualified candidates, we urge you to respect Secretary Mattis' judgment in filling key roles in the Department he has been entrusted with leading.

At a time when America faces a series of grave national security challenges, we cannot allow our leadership in the world to be undermined by the absence of qualified leaders in key posts in our government. Again, we request that you take immediate action to fill the dozens of vacancies in critical national security positions throughout your Administration.

Sincerely,



Ruben Gallego
Member of Congress



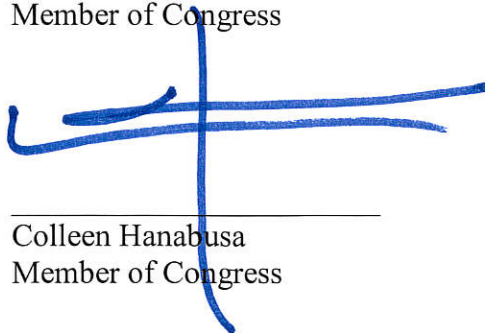
Stephanie N. Murphy
Member of Congress




Seth Moulton
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Jacky Rosen
Member of Congress



Colleen Hanabusa
Member of Congress



Donald Norcross
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